



Classroom Meeting

Developed by Debbie Bambino, 2005.

Classroom Meetings are a safe, quick way to publicly take the pulse of your group around a particular topic or issue. Usually done as a precursor for other activities involving text, data etc.

1. Choose your topic or theme and generate three questions in advance:

- Defining
- Personalizing
- Extending

For example:

Define a learning community.

Briefly describe a benefit you've experienced as part of a learning community.

How might the creation of learning communities support increased student achievement?

2. Share the questions with your group. Post the questions, or distribute them in writing to facilitate individual reflection and response. (It is usually best to have participants jot down their responses before forming your circle.)

3. Form a circle and answer the questions in rounds. (It is easiest to go around the circle. Allow people to pass and go back at the end of each round to provide those who have passed with an additional opportunity to share.) The facilitator takes notes and tries to capture key phrases or ideas from each participant.

4. After all questions have been answered, the facilitator shares a recap of the highlights that they recorded. The facilitator describes what they heard without evaluation, i.e. — *a number of people said learning communities offered support*

5. Debrief the process either in writing, or verbally. Proceed with follow up experiences that dig deeper into the topic, i.e. — current research.

Notes:

In most groups there will be members who relish the recap and members who find it redundant. Stress the importance of responding to varied learning styles and make note of the short time it took to offer the recap. The entire meeting usually takes about 20-30 minutes with a group of 25 or more people.

Feel free to add follow up questions as needed.



Classroom Meeting Tips

From Ways We Want Our Classroom to Be by The Child Development Center

Three Types of Meetings

- Planning/Decision Making
 - Setting norms, choosing a name, theme etc., organizing events
- Check-In
 - Reflections, Assessing understanding or progress
- Problem-Solving/Consciousness Raising
 - Tapping prior knowledge before a unit begins
 - (This is the way Meetings are usually used with adults.)

Environment/Set Up

- Use the power of the circle
- Vary the time according to group's size, topic & age of participants
- Debrief the meeting each time.

Questioning & Response Strategies

- Remember "wait time"
- Use follow up questions as needed
 - Personal connection
 - Compare/Contrast
 - Cause & Effect
 - Benefits & Burdens

Encouraging/Managing Participation

- Brainstorming as a pre-activity...Chalk Talk
- Small group conversation starters
- Partner chats
- Individual writing & reflection
- Read aloud prompts

Always remember to review participation norms before meetings. No conversation across the circle. Free to pass. What we say here, stays here.